

CHAPTER II  
PSYCHOPEDAGOGICS  
AND THE PSYCHIC LIFE  
OF A CHILD-IN-EDUCATION\*

G. V. Ferreira

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Psychopedagogics has the psychic life of a child-in-education as its field of study. Upbringing or educating is involved with the psychic life of a child because he/she always is involved in such a situation.

That is, there is no doubt that he/she grows up, but how he/she grows up and the extent to which his/her becoming takes a desired course in the direction of proper adulthood is a matter of educating as upbringing. Although denied by some, from the perspective of pedagogics and especially psychopedagogics, educating is a precondition for a child to become a proper adult.

The psychic life of a child is given with his/her being a child. It is his/her wealth of potentialities that are there from the beginning and it is his/her task to actualize them.

This gives rise to the question of *how* the psychic life shows or manifests itself and how it is actualized. This actualization is dynamic and shows itself in the inseparable modes of learning and becoming. They are inseparably bound because one is the condition for the other. That is, one learns as he/she becomes and becomes as he/she learns.

This actualization involves his/her own initiative in that he/she is someone who wants to learn and become; it also depends on his/her being educated (brought up) for its proper actualization. This self-initiative refers to an active participation in his/her learning and

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\* Partial translation, with considerable leeway, (2021) by George Yonge of: Chapter II of M.C.H. Sonnekus & G.V.Ferreira (1987) *Die psigiese lewe vn die kind-in-opvoeding: 'n Handleiding in die psychopedagogiek*, pp. 24-74 (Revised edition). Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers. An earlier and shorter translation appeared as chapter II in Sonnekus, M. C. H. (Ed.) (1985) *Learning: A psychopedagogic perspective*. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.

becoming and immediately calls attention to the modes by which he/she actualizes his/her learning and becoming (actualizes his/her psychic life). These modes display a profoundly reciprocal coherence and are an inseparable unity. They are: *experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing* and *behaving*. These modes of living represent a particular dynamic in a child's psychic life by which learning and becoming are actualized but also in terms of which upbringing, as support for his/her actualization, takes its course.

*How does psychopedagogics study the actualization of a child's psychic life in a situation of educating?* A scientist takes the essences he/she has viewed [wesenschau] in the lifeworld of a child, i.e., experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving, and elevates them to psychopedagogical categories in terms of which he/she then elucidates and describes the actualization of a child's becoming and learning. This elucidating and describing are what is meant by scientific practice and it results in a psychopedagogical theory.

Before considering becoming and learning as modes in which the psychic life is manifested, it is helpful to elaborate further the use of psychopedagogical categories.

[Human] scientific thought only is possible if reality is taken as the point of departure. Thus, its first task is to *delimit* its area of study within the greater whole of the human lifeworld. By this delimiting, a scientist makes it his/her objective to know and understand what forms his/her *theme* of study by using a particular method or methods. This is done with the aim of radically thinking through this area to disclose, describe and interpret its essentials.

Any elucidation and description uses categories to illuminate the theme of focus. They are the basis for a scientist's thinking and discoursing with other scientists and they are the foundation for a particular scientific theory. The application and use of these categories enable a scientist to elucidate and evaluate a particular lifeworld phenomenon (e.g., educating). Also, they are used to disclose other essences. In practicing science, these categories

include describing and elucidating the essences of the theme of study. Thus, scientific thinking is categorical thinking.

In a radical (radix = root) or fundamental thinking through of human reality, modern philosophical anthropology, that has originated along phenomenological lines, has used such categories. Examples are that human being already finds him/herself in the world, that he/she is openness, potentiality, bodiliness, etc. These fundamental categories that express the essentials of being human are called human or anthropological categories.

Categorical thinking in the practice of pedagogics as a science is not new and it is pedagogues such as Landman (fundamental pedagogics), Van der Stoep (didactic pedagogics), Sonnekus (psychopedagogics) and many others who give expression to categorical thinking in their writings.

In practicing psychopedagogics as an autonomous part-perspective of pedagogics, scientists such as Sonnekus (lived experiencing and knowing), Pretorius (lived experiencing), Van der Merwe (willing), Bondesio and Botha (behaving) and Ferreira (experiencing) have thrown light on these categories in studying these essentials of the psychic life. Their aim is to uncover, elucidate and describe the psychic life of a child within a broader framework of the world of education to formulate a scientific theory that will clarify (elucidate) a child's becoming and learning in such a situation. This scientific work is not only aimed at theory forming but also at the possibility of improving the practice of educating. That is, scientific insights into the actualization of a child's psychic life, especially as this takes the form of learning and becoming, can be applied successfully to teaching-learning events (e.g., all school phases) not only to understand them better but also possibly to improve the effectiveness of their practice. A task of this nature requires the concerted efforts of the different pedagogical perspectives.

## 2. A FUNDAMENTAL VIEW OF THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE PSYCHIC LIFE OF A CHILD-IN-EDUCATION

### 2.1 Becoming and learning

From the first moment of his/her existence, a child-in-the-world announces that he/she is someone who will participate in it until the end of his/her life. This participation has the form of questioning and answering what surrounds him/her. Because of his/her openness and directedness to the world, from the beginning he/she is actively involved in actualizing his/her given potentialities and this implies that he/she is busy changing. This changing, i.e., becoming, is observable in his/her conduct, actions and behaviors. It involves a progressive and continuous movement in the direction of the world of an adult. It is directed to becoming a proper adult.

From a psychopedagogical perspective the question is what is the “basis” and “how” of this becoming different. The question of basis is answered in two ways. First, as a human being, he/she is someone who will be and become (change). As given potentiality, his/her psychic life disposes him/her to become grown up. Consequently, he/she can take an active part in his/her becoming. Second, it is an irrefutable fact that a child, because of his/her essential nature, needs the aid and support of an adult. Without educating (as upbringing), he/she cannot become a proper adult. For this reason, educating is the necessary “other side” of his/her becoming. Indeed, Langeveld says that without upbringing a child cannot come to fulfillment as a person. By this he means that it is simply impossible to actualize his/her life in accordance with the demands of propriety without education.

When becoming is described as a change that a child undergoes, especially via upbringing, the question remains of “how” this is possible. The answer is *learning*. Learning is an original mode by which a human being *finds him/herself in the world*. A child learns because he/she is a *person*. In becoming, he/she also shows that he/she him/herself wants to learn. This initiative to learn has its origin in human openness for and directedness to the world (i.e., intentionality). As an authentic human phenomenon, learning as potentiality is given with his/her psychic life and shows itself in the original life relationship between child and world.

Learning is the basis for becoming and changing since, in essence, becoming cannot occur without learning. Although a child him/herself becomes and learns, the event of changing is not a

matter of course in his/her life. A child is disposed by his/her *potentialities* to change, but the proper actualization of these potentialities is, *par excellence*, a matter of educating as upbringing. So, he/she doesn't learn because he/she is brought up, but rather he/she is brought up because he/she can learn. In this light, he/she is educated by an adult to change, thus, to learn from an early age. The educative relationship is carried by an adult's teaching and a child's readiness to learn. Teaching and learning, as essentials of the course of upbringing, are aimed at a child increasingly becoming adult. It is an educator's responsibility to accompany a child so that he/she progressively lives as an adult. Thus, by teaching, the situation of educating must offer a child an opportunity to learn and to make his/her own the norms, worthwhile dispositions and skills of the adult world. In this way, increasingly he/she is given greater responsibilities, choices and decisions, all of which indicate he/she is moving nearer to proper adulthood.

Thus, educating, teaching, becoming and learning become increasingly connected as far as a child's becoming adult is concerned. To understand this connection from a psychopedagogical view, it is helpful to discuss briefly three questions: what does educating have to be like to support a child in his/her becoming; where is this change noticeable; and, how is this change brought about?

*First question: What does educating have to look like to support a child in his/her becoming?*

Adult support given to a child in his/her becoming necessarily takes place within the framework of educating within a special adult-child educative *relationship* (authority, understanding, trust) so this situation can take a particular *course* (association, encounter, etc.) and by *activities* of educating (giving meaning with increasing responsibility, norm exemplification and emulation, etc.), it can *aim* for proper adulthood as its purpose. However, instead of giving a detailed answer in this fundamental pedagogical sense, the basis of discussion is the psychopedagogical distinction of three dimensions of educating, i.e., affective, cognitive and normative educating

(Sonnekus). For several reasons these three interrelated modes of educating are indispensable for a child's becoming adult.

*Affective educating*, the emotional *accompaniment* by an *adult* (parent, teacher, etc.) provides the ground for a child's becoming to take its course. It is characterized by a warm, intimate atmosphere underlying the educative relationship between educator and educand. A child and adult experience a feeling of mutual trust that, with love and understanding, inspires a child to open him/herself to upbringing. This affective relationship strengthens and influences his/her emotional life such that he/she shows a progressive willingness and readiness, as well as self-confidence to explore his/her world. This provides a fruitful and stable basis for educative intervention and it increases the likelihood that a child him/herself will work more actively at actualizing his/her becoming.

*Cognitive educating*, also known as understanding or knowing accompaniment, rests on the stable emotional base provided by affective education or accompaniment. This relationship is characterized by a purposeful striving of both adult and child to better know and to unconditionally accept each other. An adult accepts the responsibility for understanding a child in his/her child being, and in light of this knowledge, supports his/her becoming in the direction of adulthood. An example of this mode of educating is an adult's continual readiness to provide answers to his/her questions that are a search for clarity and certainty with respect to his/her involvement. Here support and intervention also come into play during which an adult explains to a child why certain actions are acceptable and approvable while others are viewed as improper. In cognitive educating, an adult must always take into consideration a child's level of becoming so that he/she can make the educative content his/her own (learn). Such educating supports a child in his/her knowing life (cognitive becoming) and guides him/her to continually actualize his/her becoming on a higher level.

The necessity for *normative education* arises because a child's course of becoming also manifests itself with respect to the demands of propriety and the values of a view of life to be obeyed. It is primarily affective and cognitive educating that lay the foundation for this. The contents of propriety, etc. are presented to a child

daily through teaching (at home, in school, in church) in such a way that he/she not only becomes sensitive to values but also can purposefully give expression to these necessary life contents in his/her behavior. A child's lived experiencing the meaningfulness of values and norms is indispensable for the totality of his/her becoming adult.

*Second question: Where is the change in a child's becoming noticeable?*

The answer clearly points to an evaluation of a child's becoming. This means an evaluation of the effect of an adult's educative teaching as well as the level of becoming on which a child finds him/herself.

In searching for criteria for judging this, it is clear from a child's directedness to and involvement with his/her lifeworld that there will be a change in his/her becoming only if he/she learns or has learned. His/her learning effect and the consequence that it has finds its sedimentation in and shows a connection with the modes by which he/she manifests his/her becoming to us as changing, i.e., progressively and sustainably exploring, signs of emancipating, more distancing and objectifying in his/her behaving as well as marked differentiating regarding his/her potentialities and activities of his/her own choosing. These modes by which he/she shows him/herself as becoming different eventually can be used as criteria to determine the effects of his/her learning activities on the quality of his/her becoming; in other words, they become the criteria for judging if his/her becoming is progressively elevated in the direction of proper adulthood.

The question now is what is understood by each of these modes of becoming and how they show themselves in a child's lifeworld. As a mode of becoming, *exploring* is a child's initiative to go out to the world. From the beginning, he/she has the potential and will to explore and investigate the world. By exploring it, he/she proclaims his/her wanting to be someone, a positive sign that he/she is becoming. Langeveld, who introduced this category, sees it as a basic given with a child's psychic life in that it is connected with his/her becoming. He says a child only explores the world

adequately if he/she experiences security and safety in an educative situation.

It is distinctive of a secure child that he/she voyages in his/her world, encounters things and people, actively enters relationships with them and gradually learns to know them. In this respect, the following statement by Langeveld is meaningful: “Child and world mean something for each other on condition that he is active, goes out of himself into the world—in short, if he *explores* and *experiences* it.”

How is *exploring*, as a mode of becoming, actualized? It cannot be thought of apart from a child’s initiative to learn and that each moment of exploring, whether *willed* or *unwilled* (not purposeful), results in learning. That is, there is no exploring unless a child learns something, thus acquires definite knowledge of what he/she explores and researches. In addition, exploring, as such, cannot occur without learning since when exploring the world, he/she always becomes aware of something (senses), perceives something, thinks about something, etc.

The quality as well as the separate modes by which he/she *explores* depend on his/her level of becoming in the sense that a young child explores his/her world bodily by means of touching, smelling, tasting, seeing, etc. An older child, already having such possessed experience at his/her disposal, explores his/her world more by thinking, comparing, analyzing, interpreting. There already is a greater difference between an older than younger one since the former has a larger and more comprehensive possessed experience or knowledge at his/her disposal. A person is a totality of potentialities and explores his/her world as such; thus, the above difference merely shows a shifting accent in exploring depending on his/her level of becoming.

When a child explores, he/she already indicates his/her *emancipating* or [increasing] initiative to be and to become more *independent* (Sonnekus). It is the aim of all educating to support a child in his/her exploring so that he/she progressively becomes more emancipated. As a child progresses on his/her way to adulthood, his/her level of becoming increasingly becomes



emancipated to a point in time when an adult's educating him/her becomes superfluous. A child becomes emancipated to the extent that he/she learns to know and to possess reality. The educators must be inclined toward welcoming emancipation because it is a positive sign of a child's progressively becoming adult.

Characteristic of a child's emancipation is a gradual *distancing*, i.e., independently taking a position toward the world around him/her. As he/she grows older and learns more, his/her possessed experience (knowledge, skill, insights, etc.) increases qualitatively and quantitatively and this offers him/her the possibility to more *objectively* judge matters, relationships, codes of behavior, norms and values.

*Distancing* also occurs between a child and his/her educators and is a sign of an increasing detachment between them. This occurs, however, only by experiencing safety and security in an educative situation, and if this fails, distancing likely will not occur.

This distancing is accompanied by a variety of a child's potentialities. From the beginning he/she lives in a profound relationship with the world around him/her. Bollinger says that child and world form an inseparable unity. Though this unity is never broken, as a child becomes older, more flexible and especially acquires language, this event of differentiation becomes more conspicuous and he/she presents him/herself as someone who more sharply analyzes, makes finer distinctions and maintains his/her own point of view on reality. This event of differentiating that is especially discernible on an understanding (cognitive) level is a strong indication that he/she is becoming a proper adult.

Finally, becoming also is noticeable in the extent to which he/she succeeds in *objectifying* reality. That is, in his/her involvement with reality, he/she must be able to distance him/herself and take an objective attitude directed to identifying and defining what really is concerning a particular matter or object. It means acquiring and cultivating an objective attitude toward life (Sonnekus) without one's personal feelings being forced into the foreground. Van der Stoep says an adult searches for those moments of objectification in a child's life since objectivity is a

condition for the detached judging of facets of reality that a person (child) inevitably deals with each day.

From the above discussion it is evident that change is not possible without learning and it cannot be actualized adequately without education. Further, these modes of becoming can be used by an educator, as well as by a scientist, as criteria to judge the progress a child is making toward becoming adult. Consequently, these modes are used as psychopedagogical criteria and this makes it possible to judge the actualization of the psychic life of a child-in-education as this is manifested in his/her becoming and learning.

*Third question: how is change in a child's becoming brought about?*

To this point, the coherence of educating, becoming and learning has been discussed in terms of the essential role of affective, cognitive and normative educating (accompanying). In addition, it is shown that change, as an essential of child becoming, is noticeable in the different modes of becoming that are based on educating *and* a child's learning activities. How change is brought about was referred to only briefly.

A child can change only if he/she learns. Now the question is, what does this mean? Only some of the main points are mentioned here because it is treated in greater detail in chapter III.

Learning is an event that is actualized from the earliest moments of a child's existence. It is a human action and is actualized in an authentically human way. This is not to deny that animals learn. But they do not learn as humans do, there is a qualitative difference that cannot be ignored. Human learning is actualized in various ways that are known as modes. In this respect, Sonnekus (1974) has contributed to understanding child learning in terms of *different modes of learning*. He and his co-workers indicate the following modes of learning: *sensing, attending, perceiving, thinking, imagining, fantasizing and remembering*.

They form a coherent unity that, when actualized, constitute the totality of the activity of learning. Because of a child's fundamental openness for and directedness to the world, in his/her going out to the world (*experiencing*), he/she is continually attentive to what

surrounds him/her. This attentive way (Van Niekerk) in which he/she finds him/herself in the world makes it possible for him/her to distinguish between self and world as well as between self and other persons. In fact, this means sensing myself, which is a first becoming aware that I stand in *relationship* to something other. Sensing, as the primary mode of learning is a becoming and being aware of things, matters, objects (learning contents), persons, etc.; it is the beginning of all learning. As a mode of learning, sensing primarily is *fore-knowing* (pre-cognitive) but it is the *foundation* on which all activities of knowing (learning) rest.

As a child is accompanied by an adult in his/her going out to the world by learning, depending on the safety and security that he/she experiences in a situation of educating, a stable sensing is created which is the basis for moving from merely being attentive to reality to explicitly attending (Van Niekerk); with this, a child is in a relationship of learning. When he/she attends he/she is *willing* to learn to know things (learning contents) as they are. Attending is the sharpening of an original *intention to learn* (sensing) and it is aimed at understanding and knowing the learning content. This intensification of sensing and attending enables him/her to, e.g., *perceive, think, remember* the learning contents on a more cognitive level. These knowing-directed modes of learning that begin with sensing and are made possible by attending enable him/her to learn to know and to possess reality. In this way, not only does he/she come to new knowledge but his/her existing possessed experience continually is broadened and deepened.

This expanding possessed experience, by which he/she continually *behaves differently*, requires that an adult providing educative teaching. The reason is that the structure of reality is immensely complicated and the contents at its base are not always accessible or understandable without teaching. The home, the school and others involved in a child's upbringing and teaching have the responsibility for unlocking the complexities of reality for him/her. Although he/she him/herself must learn, the attainment (possession) of life content requires adult, educative teaching. Thus, a child manages by learning, but his/her "proper" changing or becoming continually is the task of all adults who educate him/her.

In accordance with the coherence of educating, becoming and learning, we return to the basic psychopedagogical question of how *becoming* and *learning*, as modes by which the psychic life of a child-in-education are *manifested*, are actualized.

This actualization happens when a child *experiences* things and in a *willed* manner gives sense and meaning to his/her experiences, i.e., he/she *lived experiences* them. In this way he/she acquires knowledge, masters certain skills, etc, all of which make it possible to *behave increasingly* as an adult.

Before considering in greater detail *how* his/her psychic life is actualized educatively by experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving (used as psychopedagogical categories or essences), it is helpful to keep the following in mind:

- As far as its structure is concerned, the psychic life is a unity and is actualized by a child as a totality in his/her relationship to reality;
- Becoming and learning are the modes by which the psychic life of a child-in-education is manifested;
- Experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving are essences of a child's psychic life by which his/her becoming and learning are actualized;
- Because the structure of the psychic life is a totality, its essences can only be distinguished and not separated, hence, it is necessary to mention their coherence;
- The actualization of a child's becoming, and learning occurs within the framework of an educative situation;
- When the essences experiencing, willing, etc. are used to elucidate and describe the actualization of a child's becoming and learning, they are used as psychopedagogical categories.

## 2.2 The essences of the psychic life as psychopedagogical categories

### 2.2.1 *EXPERIENCING as a psychopedagogical category*

#### 2.2.1.1 Clarification of the concept

In exploring the etymological basis of the word *experiencing*, we see that in German it comes from “fahren” meaning “to go” or “to be in motion” and in this motion “to reach” something.

The prefix “ex” in ‘experience’ means “to undergo something”. Further, the verb experiencing” (erfahren) means “to come to know something, to *learn to know*, to become *aware of* and *to feel* something.

Bollnow also asserts that experiencing comes from the word “fahren” that in everyday colloquial speech previously meant that one moves around in space.

The prefix “ex” in experience mans that something is reached or *encountered* in the moving. In this encounter there is something learnable for a person, he/she learns to *know* that which he/she reaches. Important in this respect, Bollnow says the *personal going to things*, the self-involvement with the things of which one becomes aware. What a person experiences by means of a story or through the medium of a newspaper does not have the same impact as does being there oneself. It takes personal participation, effort, difficult work, etc. Consequently, a person benefits little by someone else’s experience; he/she must him/herself experience and learn by this experiencing.

#### 2.2.1.2 Some essential characteristics of child *EXPERIENCING*

When one begins from the standpoint that child experiencing is an authentic human phenomenon that arises in a child’s *relationship* to his/her world, from a psychopedagogical view, it is important to keep the following essential characteristics in mind:

- Experiencing is essentially the way in which a child’s openness-for and directedness-to reality (intentionality) are actualized;
- Experiencing lays the foundation for a person (child) establishing relationships with fellow-persons and things in the lifeworld;

- Experiencing means a *moving-to*, a *going-into* or *entering* reality. By experiencing, a child becomes involved with reality itself and the whole of his/her psychic life comes into motion. As an example, from the beginning he/she is involved in creating a world for him/herself by bodily movements. Movements such as touching, grasping, reaching, seeing and all ways of moving by which he/she experiences his/her world. He/she not only *goes-to* but *under-goes*, i.e., he/she is influenced by the world around him/her;
- Experiencing implies *activity* and thus an action that says something about his/her *willingness* to *do* something, to handle things, to learn, to investigate, to explore, to make choices, etc. The basis of these experiencing-learning activities is continually advancing the actualization of his/her becoming;
- Experiencing means reaching reality. This reaching contains a *first acquaintance* with it that forms a basis for an eventual understanding of it. Thus, a child not only reaches reality on a concrete level by touching, tasting, smelling, hearing or seeing but also reaches it by perceiving, thinking, imagining, etc. by which real knowledge is obtainable;
- Experiencing also is recognizable as a *willed* action. When a child experiences, there is an intention to “steal” reality. This disposes several aspects of his/her psychic life to come into action such as sensing, attending perceiving, etc. by which his/her grip on reality is strengthened. This implies that he/she explores the world, distances him/herself from it, objectifies it and eventually emancipates him/herself;
- Experiencing also is orienting that, according to Van der Stoep, means defining your own place in terms of given landmarks. It is an act of knowing by which human bodiliness is the medium and by which a person (child) communicates with the world and thus it forms the *center of orientation*. Merleau-Ponty says the body involves one in the world. In and by bodiliness a child experiences things and others in his/her world, and it is the “instrument” of experiencing. Child [bodily] orienting shows something experienced as near, far, behind, in front, above, under, left, right, .... etc., depending on the position of the body in space, now viewed as the center of orientation for experiencing and lived experiencing. On the

other hand, a child in his/her bodily being involved with things, especially via senso-motor modes of experiencing such as *touching, grasping, etc.* comes to know that things are warm or cold, rough or smooth, large or small, bitter or sweet in the light of which he/she becomes oriented. As an essence of orienting, child experiencing shows that an active self-involvement is required by which reality gradually displays a particular relief (e.g., certain things, etc. stand out against a background. Such orienting, however, first attains a real cognitive flavor as soon as a child acquires language since, in this respect, language is a means for ordering, distancing and objectifying;

- Experiencing also means learning to know. All experiencing leads to “knowledge” that varies from a pre-conceptual or intuitive knowing (Sonnekus) based on an *attunement* to things and a trust that they are as they are *immediately* experienced to a conceptual or cognitive knowing that rests on perceiving, thinking, remembering, etc.;
- Child experiencing also embodies moments of *anticipation* that contain a *fore-grasping* of what is given in immediate experience. Thus, from his/her “experienced-ness” or possessed knowledge, he/she anticipates certain things. This can be illustrated concretely by the following example. We say we see a house; however, we actually only see the front side. The backside, as an unseen part of a house is anticipated within this perceiving. Thus, this aspect of anticipation embraces aspects of imagining and fantasizing, or thinking and even of remembering;
- Experiencing also is a meaning-giving, meaning-receiving activity. A child continually gives sense and meaning to what he/she experiences, and especially it is here that his/*her lived experiencing* comes to the foreground (See below).

In light of the above moments characteristic of child experiencing, these essence are actualized as a totality in the act of experiencing and they merely are distinguished for convenience of explication. In agreement with this, and by means of Strasser’s synthesis, a provisional description of child experiencing is, “*Experiencing is an original, continuous act of turning to and reaching (grasping) reality that leads to knowing. It is the beginning of becoming aware*

*of reality by which cognitive or conceptual thought is made possible. It is a first orientation of a subject (person) in his surrounding world and forms the basis for understanding the world on a higher level.”*

### 2.2.1.3 Experiencing as a mode of actualizing a child's becoming and learning

From the beginning, a child finds him/herself as open-potentiality in the world and this is shown by the fact that he/she experiences the world. In his/her *being involved* with his/her lifeworld, he/she experiences the nearness of surrounding things. This not only includes his/her bodily contact of his/her mother through caring, cleaning and feeding, but also his/her most original experiences. By *feeling-, seeing-, tasting- and hearing-experiences*, he/she is aware of his/her own presence as well as of the presence of others and of things in the world. For example, the “warmth” of his/her mother's bodily presence is *felt*, her milk *tastes*, *her sympathetic smile is seen* and her comforting voice is *heard*. These earliest experiences in the continual progress of his/her becoming are the first moments by which he/she begins to *know* (learn). Although initially these experiences are strongly *self-bound* and even though he/she has difficulty distinguishing between experiences of him/herself and the world, they already include *moments of learning*. Thus, here there is still little knowing or cognitive experiencing and he/she still cannot adequately distance him/herself from reality. He/she still experiences reality preponderantly on an emotional (pre-cognitive) level. However, it cannot be denied that these initial experiences embody aspects of knowing.

For a child, the primary situation of upbringing is the first space for experiencing. Experiencing this pedagogical space as *room for becoming* and as *safe and secure*, also lays the ground for his/her willingness to explore his/her world while experiencing it. In a situation of educating as upbringing, for the first time he/she experiences his/her *helplessness and dependency* on an adult for *loving care, authoritative accompaniment, and continuous accessibility*, all of which pave his/her way to go to meet his/her world with adequate confidence.



The progressing course of a child's experiencing, by which his/her becoming is actualized, is an event during which he/she continually *learns* new things. That is, he/she not only experiences *bodily* but also via *language, his/her named experiences, orderings, classifications about which he/she thinks* and thus *learns*. This means that in the course of his/her becoming adult, he/she continually experiences by learning, and learns by experiencing. Experiencing is not only the basis for all learning, but, via his/her learning activities, he/she gains additional "experience".

Indeed, Buck agrees that experiencing is the basis for all learning. Learning necessarily belongs to experiencing and it is its necessary consequence. In addition, he says that experiencing without lasting leaning consequences, from which nothing is learned, is not experiencing. That which experiencing changes is the person him/herself, his/her conduct, his/her actions. This experiencing also leads to additional child becoming and shows an elevation in his/her becoming. In this respect, Linschoten's statement is meaningful: "Experiencing transforms us moment to moment; experiencing change, changes us. One who has experienced has a history behind him that has taught him to see, to think and to experience differently". By experiencing, not only does a child's psychic life come into motion but it is actualized. He/she learns when he/she experiences, explores the world and because of a qualitative as well as quantitative increase in his/her possessed experience, he/she distances him/herself from reality, objectifies it and thus emancipates him/herself.

However, a child's experiencing occurs in time. An adult, whether parent or teacher, accompanies a child in his/her acquisition of experience and is responsible for elucidating certain experiences for him/her as well as to purposefully create situations (at home and at school) during which he/she can acquire experience. These situations vary from the simplest teaching at home during which time he/she learns to dress and feed him/herself, and to behave properly to the more formalized teaching in school where he/she becomes acquainted with new, ever more complicated facets of reality.

In summary, experiencing is an essence of the psychic life of a child-in-education by which his/her leaning and becoming are actualized. Also, it is seen that a description and elucidation of this event is possible if we use experiencing as a psychopedagogical category.

### *2.2.2. WILLING as a psychopedagogical category*

#### 2.2.2.1 Clarification of the concept

With reference to Van der Merwe, who has undertaken an intensive study of WILLING as an essence of the psychic life of a child-in-education, the following definition is given from an etymological point of view: Willing is the potentiality by which a person is disposed to consciously perform an action. It shows a *striving, a desiring, a wanting to do something*, all of which suggest a connection with a person's emotional life.

Willing also means an *initiative* that is the basis for a person's freedom, choosing, deciding and readiness to take part. It also is a direction-giving power in the performance of actions. In addition, it is related to the future in the sense that a particular aim is striven for that must yet be fulfilled. This striving is expressed in such sayings as: "I still want..." "When I grow up I will...", etc. According to Van der Merwe and C. K. Oberholzer, these expressions of willing directed to the future cannot be actualized adequately if a person's intellectual potentialities are not also considered. Further, with reference to the view of Rollo May, willing is linked to one's own identity and identity acquisition that are expressed in such sayings as "I can", "I will", and "I am".

Willing has value for educating a child, especially concerning the actualization of his/her psychic life. It embodies a dynamic and power by which a child's psychic life is activated and its goal-directedness is realized.

#### 2.2.2.2 Some essential characteristics of child WILLING

From a psychopedagogical view, Van der Merwe differentiates the following essences:

- Willing is a manifestation of child *intentionality* that especially is expressed in his/her openness for and directedness to reality;
- Willing is *dynamic* and is the basis for actualizing one's own *initiative*. This implies an initiative to actualize his/her psychic life in terms of becoming and learning;
- An act of willing is actualized by a personal decision that is determined normatively. By willing he/she gives form to the fact that he/she him/herself is someone who will be and become. It embodies a personal choice and readiness to contribute actively to actualizing his/her own psychic life;
- Willing is *goal-directed* indicating that his/her psychic life is actualized in terms of specific purposes. Via willing, his/her psychic life is directed to an aim by which it is actualized as a totality-in-function;
- Willing is *direction-giving* and *indicates a course*. This means that the *direction-giving* and *course-indicating*, as directed to an aim, defines the aim-directed nature of the actualization of his/her becoming and learning;
- Willing implies an *acknowledgment of the inevitabilities of a child's relationship to the world*. This means his/her bodiliness, his/her potentialities and reality itself present particular limits for actualizing his/her becoming and learning;
- Willing is qualified by one's *emotional life*. A stable emotional life defines the strength of willing while emotional lability weakens it;
- The quality of actualizing intellectual potentialities is co-defined by willing. This means that his/her potentialities, and particularly his/her intellectual potentialities, are actualized adequately provided he/she has the necessary willpower at his/her disposal;
- Willing points to a future; consequently, it is the driving power basic to a child's becoming a proper adult;
- By actualizing his/her willing, a child confirms and acquires his/her own *identity*.

From these essential characteristics, now the question is the meaning willing holds for a child's actualization of his/her becoming and learning on the way to adulthood.

### 2.2.2.3 Willing as a mode of actualizing child becoming and learning

Since no one is born an adult, each person has the task of becoming a proper adult. Thus, from the beginning of his/her existence, there is a fruitful tension between what he/she is and what he/she ought to become.

No one has the right to deprive a child of his/her childhood, but it is inappropriate for him/her to remain a child. However, as far as being human is concerned, a child shows him/herself as someone who *will* become adult. From an early age, he/she wishes and desires to be an adult. This child *initiative* to become adult is seated in his/her *willing* and it creates the golden opportunity for an adult, through educating, to accompany him/her so that this aim can be attained.

Within the framework of his/her own potentialities, an adult is a good judge of life and its demands of propriety and has the responsibility, by educative teaching, to eventually search for ways and means by which a child's wanting to become grownup can be supported actively.

Also, by way of affective educating, an adult supports a child such that he/she is ready (willing) to experience and explore his/her world. Such educating that is characterized by a climate of warmth, love and trust encourages him/her in his/her *willingness to freely* (Van der Merwe) decide to contribute actively to his/her own becoming. Affective educating strengthens his/her *willing* and his/her cognitive exploration of his/her world. This requires that he/she is accompanied or educated *cognitively* so he/she will *explore* his/her world by *perceiving, thinking, imagining, etc.* His/her actualization of willing also defines the nature and direction of his/her becoming, specifically the quality and level of his/her actualization of his/her cognitive potentialities.

Van der Merwe says a child must be accompanied by an adult to actualize his/her potentialities for knowing; this means awakening his/her willingness to properly and responsibly use his/her

potentialities. Thus, he/she learns because of a willful decision and the effect his/her learning activities have on his/her becoming largely are determined by the *strength* of this willing. There are numerous examples of this in the everyday course of educating and teaching. Learning difficulties often are the outcome of a defiant willingness to learn. If his/her willpower is deficient and there is a lack in the direction and course of his/her becoming, it will be retarded and thus his/her *emancipation* will be seriously handicapped.

Proper adulthood is the aim of *all* educative teaching. This aim is difficult to attain if a child does not show signs that he/she progressively maintains his/her own standpoint toward matters, norms, values, etc. However, if he/she succeeds in gradually establishing a position toward him/herself, passes judgments and makes choices (normative becoming), there is a definite corroboration of his/her own *identity*. Then, he/she announces him/herself in his/her willingness to be personally involved in his/her own becoming grown up, i.e., someone who is willing to be co-responsible for the unfolding of his/her becoming in the direction of adulthood.

By way of a *synthesis*, the actualization of a child's psychic life, as it shows itself in learning and becoming, is co-determined by his/her willing. Also, attention was directed to the part played by educating in his/her willing, without which his/her wanting to become and learn cannot take a desirable course. The coherence of child willing and experiencing similarly is brought to the fore in the sense that the actualization of willing influences his/her *going to* reality, not only concerning its direction and course but especially the quality of his/her experiencing.

## 2.2.2 LIVED EXPERIENCING as *psychopedagogical category*

### 2.2.2.1 Clarification of the concept

Lived experiencing refers to such events as living through, going through, living to see, being witness to, living in, etc. It refers to a condition that *rests* on experiencing. Thus, lived experiencing is an act or action by which something is *lived through*; in the language

of psychopedagogy, *what one experiences is, at the same time, lived experienced*, since it is an action by which a person *gives sense and meaning to what is experienced*.

#### 2.2.2.2 Some essential characteristics of LIVED EXPERIENCING

Following the lead of Sonnekus, Pretorius, Van Niekerk and others who have studied and used it as a psychopedagogical category, lived experiencing is a phenomenon in a child's lifeworld and, we turn to the following important essences of it:

- Lived experiencing is an action arising out of a person's openness for and being directed to reality. As an activity, it is primarily *sense-seeking* as well as *sense- and meaning-giving* (Husserl). Thus it is normative and, as such, we speak of *lived experiencing meaning*. As an intentional being, a child continually gives sense and meaning to the world around him/her, and this occurs by the act of *lived experiencing*;
- In its origin, lived experiencing is *both emotional* (affective) as well as *knowing* (cognitive) and they are only distinguishable and not separable (Heidegger);
- In a search for sense and meaning, lived experiencing always is directed to *something*. This something appears as lifeworld contents (e.g., norms, values codes of behavior, learning contents, etc.) to which a child continually gives meaning;
- Lived experiencing has a character of continuous flowing called the stream of (lived) experience by Linschoten;
- Lived experiencing has an integral character and therefore always is a *unitary* lived experiencing. Each moment of lived experiencing, in the stream of lived experiencing, thus is characterized as [simultaneously] emotional, knowing and normative;
- Lived experiencing is selective and implies that a child, in his/her being directed-to-something, gives selective sense and meaning to that something;
- Also, lived experiencing continually is changing and because of its dynamics, it is an important mode of actualizing a child's becoming and learning (Sonnekus). This implies that as he/she becomes and learns in time (on the basis of his/her

- historicity) he/she repeatedly lived experiences differently (Pretorius);
- Lived experiencing always is person-bound; that is, it always is my own (Pretorius) because it always involves sense and meaning for someone (e.g., me). Each person (child) gives sense and meaning to the world in a unique way;
  - Human bodiliness is [at] the *core* of lived experiencing. *In and by the body that I am* (Merleau-Ponty) *I [lived] experience my being-in-the-world.*

Against this background, Sonnekus describes it as follows:

*Lived experiencing is an intentional taking a personal position (attitude) by a child (person), as a totality-in-function, in his/her communicating with reality.*

As in the cases of experiencing and willing, further attention is given to lived experiencing as a mode of actualizing the psychic life of a child-in-education.

### 2.2.3.3 Lived experiencing as a mode of actualizing a child's becoming and learning

It is an essential and authentic human fact that a child, in his/her everyday involvement with the world, continually is giving sense and meaning to (lived experiences) things, fellow persons, etc. with which he/she has established relationships.

By means of his/her openness for and directedness to reality, he/she continually searches for clarity, not only of what concerns his/her own existence but also with respect to what surrounds him/her. Since from the beginning he/she finds him/herself in a situation of upbringing (educating), he/she is accompanied by an adult in this search for meaning.

While educating, an adult unlocks content that he/she regards as meaningful for a child's becoming adult. In his/her turn, a child lived experiences the meaningfulness of this content by giving meaning to it and by which he/she continually actualizes his/her becoming on a higher level.

However, now the question is *how* lived experiencing, as an original mode of living, manifests itself. With reference to the above essences, it is actualized as a stream of experiencing in which the distinguishable aspects of *affective*, *cognitive* and *normative* lived experiencing are embedded. To form a better understanding of these distinguishable moments and to determine their significance for a child's becoming and learning, it is necessary to examine each briefly. But these moments are actualized as an inseparable unity and they interact and influence each other.

With respect to a child's *emotional lived experiencing*, following Straus, Sonnekus and others, we distinguish among the *pathic lived experiencing* of a younger child and the *affective lived experiencing* of an older one. Pathic lived experiencing is emotional and strongly bodily determined and is actualized on a *concrete-sensory* level. Examples are a child's exploring the world bodily (play) where everything is touched, felt, tasted, seen. In this way, he/she not only experiences his/her world, but gives meaning to things on an emotional level. The meanings of things are mostly defined by "I", or as Langeveld puts it: "A child lives in an open communication with the 'world' in which things do not have a fixed meaning. At one moment a chair is a thing to sit on and in the following moment it is a 'riding horse', something to climb on, etc."

At this point in a child's becoming, his/her emotional life is fluctuating from moments of stability to *instability* (lability), even impulsivity, depending on the situation in which he/she finds him/herself. For example, at one moment he/she is cheerful and gay, only to burst into tears in the next. However, as he/she becomes and learns and his/her possessed experience increases in quality and extent, his/her emotional life displays more stability, the high point of which is reached at the end of puberty. Stability implies that the emotional life shows more stability and that he/she gradually controls his/her emotions and keeps them in check.

An older child can manage his/her emotional life to a greater degree and, in this respect, we refer to affective lived experiencing to indicate the *elevation* in his/her lived experiencing as an elevation in becoming. Such affective lived experiencing shows mainly an



increased sensitivity for values and norms with an attendant increased appreciation of *life values* such as the aesthetic, moral and religious facets of our existence. However, this movement [or progressive becoming] from the pathic to the affective mode cannot be actualized without educating, and especially affective educating.

In comparison with a young child's *emotional* lived experiencing, that is mostly fore-knowing, for an older child, his/her *cognitive* lived experiencing is directed to *learning to know* reality as it is. On this level the concern is with *knowledge* not only related to the "I" but as it has validity for "us". In this respect, we also distinguish between the *gnostic lived experiencing* of a younger child and the *cognitive lived experiencing* of an older one (Straus, Sonnekus).

The *gnostic lived experiencing* of a younger child (that has a strong emotional undertone) is mainly visual-perceptible and is actualized on a concrete level. When a child first acquires language, gradually he/she distances him/herself from the concrete and can enter a limited abstract level. However, as he/she masters language and can name his/her concrete experiences, talk about them, discuss them, order and systematize them, he/she finds him/herself on the level of the abstract, and in this respect, there is *cognitive lived experiencing*. Cognitive lived experiencing implies that he/she is *aware of, grasps, knows and understands*. However, the initial *gnostic lived experiencing* of a younger child also has knowledge and insights as outcomes, but they do not show the same depth and quality as does the *cognitive lived experiencing* of an older child.

Emotional and knowing lived experiencing are *related to each other directly and reciprocally* in that a *stable emotional lived experiencing* is the basis on which a child's *knowing lived experiencing* rests, while *knowing lived experiencing*, in its turn, brings order and control to his/her emotional life. An example is a child who feels *safe* and *secure* and, on this basis, is disposed to show a willingness to explore his/her world *gnostically* or *cognitively* by means of *perceiving, thinking, remembering, etc.* In this way, he/she not only comes to know but also is able to distinguish between right and wrong, proper and improper by which his/her *normative becoming* is actualized.

This gradual elevation in his live experiencing from the pathic (via the pathic-affective) to the affective and from the gnostic (via the gnostic-cognitive) to the cognitive, he/she repeatedly actualizes his/her learning and becoming on a higher level. However, this elevation shows a complex other side, i.e., educative accompaniment. So, emotional (affective) educating by an adult is indispensable for a child's emotional lived experiences. A child who lived experiences *security* in connection with the *love, trust, authority and understanding* that he/she lived experiences in a situation of educating/teaching does not recoil from the *tasks* that are on his/her way to becoming, while a child whose emotions *lack stability* often is derailed and does not become properly *emancipated*. Stable emotional lived experiencing also opens the way for a child's adequate knowing or cognitive education. This is because then he/she stands increasingly open to being taught by an adult and is ready to interpret and master, on a gnostic-cognitive level, the content presented via this teaching by giving sense and meaning to it.

Finally, an actualization of a child's psychic life in terms of becoming and learning is possible when we use "lived experiencing" as a psychopedagogical category. However, the coherence [of the categories] within the psychic life always must be kept in mind.

#### *2.2.4 KNOWING as a psychopedagogical category*

##### 2.2.4.1 Clarification of the concept

In analyzing the concept "knowing" we meet a number of related concepts such as knowledge, acquaintance, insight, etc., each of which, in its coherence of meaning, is connected with the concept "knowing" and needs further clarification.

When "knowing", as a verb, is analyzed, it has the following meanings: to have knowledge or understanding something, to be aware; of or acquainted with ... ; to have accurate information or to have, awareness; knowledge about something at one's disposal. As a noun, the concept includes the following ideas: the totality of what a person knows; acquaintance with; knowing; good understanding; insight; experiences of; learned facts; etc.

In considering these definitions of “knowing” and “knowledge”, they show an interconnection and only can be distinguished from each other with great difficulty. Similarly, the concept “knowledge” and “insight” are inseparably bound to “knowing”.

A distinction between knowing and knowledge that is useful is that knowing (verb) is an activity or action while knowledge is the result of this activity by which insight and understanding are acquired.

We place the concepts knowing and knowledge within the framework of a person-world relationship. In this connection, Heidegger shows that knowing is a primordial mode in which a person finds him/herself in the world. He links this both to “Befindlichkeit”, which means to find him/herself attuned to the world, and to “Verstehen”, which means that a person is understanding in the world, the latter (Verstehen) makes all modes of knowing possible. He emphasizes that these modes of attunement and understanding in which a person finds him/herself in the world are distinguishable but not separable. In psychopedagogical language, each action of knowing that leads to understanding and insight has an attuned or emotional undertone, while this emotional attunement already is the beginning or “birth” of knowledge.

#### 2.2.4.2 Some essential characteristics of knowing

Following in the footsteps of Strasser, but especially those of Sonnekus, who has looked closely at “knowing” as an essence in a child’s lifeworld and eventually has defined it as a psychopedagogical category. The following essential characteristics are differentiated:

- Knowing originates in child intentionality, an activity directed to knowing the world or reality in which he/she finds him/herself. As such it is an action directed to a search for the sense and meaning of all he/she is in relationship with and that awakens his/her wonder;
- Knowing, as far as its beginning is concerned, essentially is *intuitive knowing* and, as such, is the beginning of all

- knowledge. Intuitive knowing implies a knowing relationship built on an *attunement* to and trust that things are as they are immediately experienced. Although *intuitive knowing* is pre-conceptual, it already includes the beginning moments for conceptual (*cognitive*) knowing;
- Knowing is question-asking and thus is a search for clarity, understanding and insight. In his/her questioning nature, his/her relationship of knowing is inseparably entwined with the experience of wonder (Gerd Brand) that stimulates his/her willingness to learn;
  - The action of knowing embodies an aspect of anticipation; i.e., fore-grasping (understanding) of that which will be known;
  - Knowing is structuring, i.e., an analyzing, schematizing, ordering, interpreting, synthesizing activity;
  - Knowing also is an activity of comprehending and includes aspects of understanding, grasping and insight without which objective knowledge is unthinkable.

With reference to only a few of these essential characteristics of knowing as a phenomenon in a child's lifeworld, the act of knowing is of cardinal importance for actualizing the psychic life of a child-in-education. Also, change, as an essence of child becoming, only is possible in so far as he/she learns to know, since knowing is an essential of learning it co-defines this change. In other words, a child changes (becomes) as he/she learns, and he/she learns in accordance with the fact that he/she *knows*.

#### 2.2.4.3 Knowing as a mode of actualizing a child's becoming and learning

The initial relationship between child and reality, especially as this is expressed early on in play, is not directed primarily to knowing reality but rather to doing, manipulating, being busy with things. This relationship is accompanied by strong emotionality and already embodies knowing things intuitively in their "lived meanings". Such intuitive knowing becomes a first basic grasp of things and paves the way for a more distanced and objective knowing. The activity of learning is implicitly present since here a child's concern with things results in knowledge. Although his/her

knowledge has a limited and fragmentary flavor, it is the beginning of real gnostic/cognitive knowing.

Intuitive knowing is not the same as sensory perception (Sonnekus), although this is included, but rather is on the level of sensing, as the mode by which all learning has its beginning. Thus, it has aspects of understanding but also of misunderstanding (Strasser), and thus it also is the origin of all experiencing and lived experiencing, of understanding and misunderstanding (Sonnekus).

From the limited and unfinished flavor of knowledge resulting from a child's acts of intuitive knowing, the task of educating is clear. A child experiences not only that he/she doesn't understand fully but directs him/herself questioningly to an adult for more clarity. By asking questions, he/she wants to better learn to know something, a phenomenon with which all educators (parents, teachers, etc.) must contend. This questioning attitude of knowing (Sonnekus) by a child goes hand-in-hand with a moment of anticipating that the object of knowing possesses particular dimensions for which he/she cannot offer an explanation (solution). This contains a fruitful moment that eventually has fundamental importance for teaching and learning. A child is in search of understanding and insight with respect to the "partners" of his/her experiencing and, therefore, there are many "why-questions" that extend over the entire life of being a child and are extremely important for meaningfully actualizing his/her becoming and learning.

This questioning attitude of knowing by a child, by which he/she learns, also is aimed at a search for structure in his/her cognitive exploration of reality. He/she is in search of certainty, wants to understand, and this is what spurs him/her on to analyze, compare, order, interpret and synthesize what is experienced (i.e., learning content, etc.) and thereby brings its structure clearly to light. Such knowing of structure brings greater clarity and enables him/her to grasp and acquire such notions as "cause-effect", "means-end" and interdependent connections.

But how are a child's knowing activities brought into motion? We find an answer in a child's actualization of the modes of learning. As a child senses reality and gives attention to it (Van Niekerk),

often he/she experiences gaps (deficiencies) in his/her possessed experience or knowledge. This spurs him/her on to a cognitive level where, by means of perceiving, thinking, remembering, etc., he/she analyses, orders, interprets and thus structures that piece of reality and, in this way, not only replenishes his/her deficiencies but broadens and deepens his/her possessed experience.

This structuring of knowing is an understanding or a real grasping of the object of knowing (Sonnekus). A child acquires insight and obtains new knowledge that is transferrable to other problem situations he/she might confront in the future.

Finally, the meaning-invested knowledge resulting from these activities of knowing forms the fabric of the modes by which he/she is going to *behave* during his/her becoming. An adult's search for distancing, emancipating, objectifying in his/her life in which his/her progress on the way to adulthood becomes noticeable is unthinkable if he/she doesn't show that gradually he/she learns to know reality. Such possessed knowledge, as possessed experience, enables him/her to loosen him/herself from an adult's help and support and to finally be recognized as an adult.

### *2.2.5 BEHAVING as a psychopedagogical category*

#### 2.2.5.1 Clarification of the concept

Viewed etymologically, the concept "behaving" is paired strongly with the normative, with the accent falling on proper, improper, good or bad behavior (behaving). In English, the verb form "behave" and in German "sich haben" and "Verhalten, refer respectively to the norm-directedness of behaving. This is seen in the following meanings of "behave":

- "behave" – to act, conduct oneself properly, to exhibit good manners, having good (bad) manners;
- "sich haben" -- refers to assuming responsibility for particular behaviors;
- "verhalten" – is translated as restrained, contained, checked behavior.

From the above behaving is about someone who behaves, and that his/her behaviors are directed by *norms* as well as by the choices he/she makes. In addition, behaving goes hand-in-hand with assuming responsibility; the latter stresses that personal choice in human behavior accords with particular norms.

#### 2.2.5.2 Some modes of appearance and essential characteristics of behaving

In his study of behaving as an essence of the psychic life of a child-in-education, Bondesio shows that it is a mode in which a child finds him/herself as a human being in the world. In contrast to a behaviorist view of behaving as an organism's reaction to stimuli in terms of reflexes, behaving is seen as an authentic human phenomenon that shows itself in the different relationships that a person establishes with his/her world. As far as its origin is concerned, human behavior is an answer to a situation, or as Buytendijk puts it, "behaving is a mode that is in harmony with a relationship, which means that a person (child) continuously is occupied with fellow humans, with things, with other living phenomena, with nature, etc."

Human behaving and its meaningfulness are expressed in human bodiliness (Merleau-Ponty) since a person directs him/herself bodily to his/her world. A person also behaves as a *totality* in relation to his/her world; therefore, behaving is the meaningful crowning of a person's total involvement with reality. This latter remark implies that one can only understand another's behavior if one really understands his/her personal circumstances, as well as the situation to which his/her behaving refers.

Behaving, as a person's answer to a situation, can give rise to different modes of expression. Hence, a goal-directed action can be viewed as behavior, as can numerous bodily expressions such as a frowning or smiling human face, waving a hand, stamping a foot, each of which expresses a particular relationship to reality.

With respect to the bases of the modes in which behaving and its essential characteristics appear, Bondesio differentiates the

following modes of behaving that can only be distinguished but not separated from each other:

- Reflexive behaving is characterized by an absence of any aspect of willing. This type of behaving is stripped of a conscious intention, of purposeful deciding (Bondesio) as well as of goal-directed action. Examples of simple reflexive behaviors are the pupil-, corneal- and plantar-reflexes.

Although reflexive behaving is not goal setting, it is qualified by goals and derives its meaning not from itself but from a totally bodily involvement of a person with his/her world (Buytendijk). The following comment by Van den Berg, cited by Bondisio, serves as an illustration: “A pupil reflexively contracts as the wanderer walks in the sunlight with his feet that also move reflexively. But the wanderer himself steps into the sunlight with a resolution to do or not to do it. With one resolve, that is important, in that resolve he makes use of many goal-appropriate reflexes. Without these reflexes, as preconditions, his resolve would be powerless. Without his resolve, the reflexes are senseless.” Thus, reflexive behaving, although it constitutes a vital part of our existence, is not meaningful in itself but becomes meaningful because a person behaves in the world as a totality.

- Voluntary behaving: The following variants of voluntary behaving are distinguished by Bondesio: simple voluntary, complex voluntary and habitual behaving. Each of these variants is characterized by a *moment of choice* expressing personal concern and responsibility. Voluntary behaving originates in a child’s openness for and directedness to reality. As such, they are ways in and by *which he/she establishes relationships* with reality that are noticeable and affirmed.

Bondesio shows that complex voluntary behaving includes moments of willing and of choice among different reasons (motives) that, in this form of behaving, are strongly brought to the foreground. Thus, a person’s choice is *willed*, he/she defines his/her *goal*, *resolves how to reach it*, and then *realizes* it.



Simple voluntary behaving is different from the complex variant merely in that there are not a variety of reasons (motives) from which choices need to be made. However, the course of complex and simple behaving remains the same.

Habitual behaving, according to Bondesio, is based on experiencing, it is executed less consciously in that there are *automatisms*. This behavior assumes the *control of specific actions* ranging from a simple matter, such as dressing, to a more complicated action, such as playing tennis. Habitual behaving usually is an action that is simple and efficient. Also, it is characterized by an apparent absence of reasons (motives), choices and decisions (Bondesio). However, these behaviors are contained in and thus are realized in actualized behavior.

In summary, *all* behaving is expressive; that is, it manifests something concerning a person as well as the reality within which he/she is involved. One of the most important ways in which a person (child) expresses him/herself in behaving is by using language because it not only symbolizes our profound relationships with the world but it ratifies and confirms them.

#### 2.2.5.3 BEHAVING as a mode of actualizing a child's becoming and learning

Becoming an adult is an event that is actualized gradually in a child's life. Attaining the aim of educating as upbringing, i.e., proper adulthood, has as a basic condition that he/she increasingly live in accord with the norms, values and behavioral codes of an adult lifeworld. This means that as he/she becomes and learns, he/she continually has the task of *elevating the level* on which he/she behaves. As he/she increasingly behaves as an adult in the everyday lifeworld, he/she gains insight into adult ways of living [behaving] and actualizes his/her becoming on a higher level.

A child's gradual and progressive *elevation* in *behaving* is a matter both of his/her taking an active part in educating and the purposeful accompaniment of him/her by an adult educator. From an early age, an adult intervenes or accepts his/her behaviors. Misconduct is condemned by warning and reprimand while

acceptance of approvable behaving is shown by an encouraging word, look or smile.

As educator, an adult has the task of seeing that while a child is behaving, he/she refines and changes it in accord with an image of adulthood. Before this change can occur, it is necessary for an adult to set an example of the life values for a child to imitate. An adult's behavior must be an example worthy of imitation by a child in light of which he/she can add to his/her behaving.

The other side of this is that an educator must, in the spontaneity of the course of educating, create situations or seize moments in order to teach a child, if he/she wants a child's behavior to be refined and changed. For a child to correctly and properly behave, he/she first requires an experiencing and lived experiencing of the sense and meaning of such modes of behaving, thus *knowledge of* as well as a willingness to decide and to carry through with such behaving. Consequently, child behaviors can never really be grasped or understood if they are not "externalized" or are made more expressive since behaviors are the crown placed on a child's experiencing, willing, his/her lived experiencing and knowing (knowledge), i.e., he/she behaves in accord with his/her *meaning imbued possessed experience*. This does not mean that he/she, in actualizing his/her psychic life (in his/her becoming and learning), will only behave positively. However, it is positive behaving that is the aim from a pedagogical point of view.

From the earliest moments of child existence, in his/her behaving he/she is directed to mastering (possessing) reality. He/she will do, handle, choose and decide for him/herself, but the execution of these actions, especially their quality, is indissolubly interwoven with what he/she already has learned. Thus, his/her level of becoming, which largely is determined by his/her learning activities, can indicate the level on which he/she is going to *behave*. Positive change and modification in his/her behaving, change in compliance with the norm-image of proper adulthood, is a sign that he/she has learned and his/her becoming is actualized in the direction of proper adulthood.

A child's behaving, which also reflects his/her possession or mastery of reality, varies in quality from child to child and from age to age. For example, a younger child can perform with ease certain simple habitual behaviors such as dressing, eating and brushing teeth, while for an older child more complex habitual behaving is obtainable to a superior degree; for example, driving a car, that not only presupposes specific BEHAVING, but also motor skills, knowledge and insight regarding the regulations, law enforcement and similar demands.

Pedagogically, a child's behaving is coupled with the *acceptance of responsibility*; therefore, his/her experiencing of and knowledge of norms and the sense and meaning he attributes to them are preconditions that make purposeful and meaningful behaving possible. A child's *voluntary behaving* that is a matter of willing, choosing deciding and doing (Bondesio), cannot be actualized outside of the other aspects of the psychic life, i.e., experiencing, willing, lived experiencing and knowing. Behaving, in its action-character (act-character), is defined by a child's *experiencing, willing, lived experiencing* and his/her *lived knowing* (Bondesio), and, therefore, the actualization of his/her psychic life has its crowning in the act of behaving.

A child becomes and learns in accord with a *situation of educating* in which he/she finds him/herself, while, at the same time, his/her behaving is defined by his/her levels of becoming and learning.

### *2.2.6 SYNTHESIS: The psychic life of a child-in-education*

At the beginning of this chapter there is an attempt to orient a reader to psychopedagogics. The emphasis is on a scientific (categorical) view of the actualization of the psychic life of a child-in-education. It is stressed that it shows itself in his/her becoming and learning, is actualized through the essences *experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving*. To elucidate and describe its actualization, these essences are elevated to psychopedagogical categories.

In this way we not only give an account of the actualization of the psychic life, but we also have continually allowed the coherent

nature of its differentiated essences to come to the fore. Although the coherence pushed itself to the fore, while discussing the differentiated essences, their coherence was purposefully kept in the background temporarily because this important matter requires separate description and elucidation.

This coherence is given as a totality-image by using terms of how the psychic life is actualized and that this totality-image is more than the sum of its different parts. This means a totality image of this actualization is only possible if we take a closer look at this coherence. From this closer look it is clarified further how a child's becoming and learning are actualized on the basis of the close interwovenness of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving as distinguishable but inseparable essences of the psychic life.

### *2.2.7 The coherent nature of the various essences of the psychic life of an educand: a learning- and becoming-perspective*

When we search for the coherence in the psychic life of a child-in-education, we have posed a very difficult problem since the psychic life is always actualized as a totality with reference to a child becoming and learning. Its essences have their sense and meaning in this larger whole, to the extent that they are meaningful for the unfolding and flourishing of his/her becoming and learning.

Becoming and learning are the modes of manifestation of the psychic life and their coherence is indissoluble. A child learns as he/she becomes and becomes (changes) as he/she learns. Because he/she is someone who wants to be someone and to become, he/she learns and, accordingly, he/she changes. This change that appears in his/her becoming is a change in the direction of proper adulthood. Hence, the meaning of actualizing his/her psychic life lies in his/her becoming adult.

From a psychopedagogical perspective, i.e., from a *becoming* and *learning* perspective, the question now is how he/she actualizes his/her psychic life as a totality. It is actualized by means of its various essences that appear as follows in their coherence.

Child experiencing is the original mode by which he/she turns to and reaches reality and *learns to know* it (acquires knowledge). It essentially is a *willed* involvement toward and in reality by which he/she *actively* relates to it. Thus, he/she establishes a relationship with his/her world as he/she *experiences*, since experiencing is the mode by which he/she continues to turn to the world (people, content, things, etc.). He/she further experiences his/her world through *sensing* (becoming aware, conscious) it by turning *attention* to, by *perceiving* it, *thinking* about it, and much more, by which he/she *learns* and his/her *becoming* flourishes.

This *experiencing* reality, however, is not an aimless wandering but rather a *willed* involvement toward an attainment of reality. Thus, then it in fact is child *willing* that, in its essences is characterized by *goal-* setting, direction-giving and deciding (Van der Merwe) that gives direction and a course in his/her *experiencing* reality (Sonnekus). Thus, he/she *experiences* to the extent that he/she *will* decide to turn him/herself to something specific (goal-directed). Child *willing* also is important with respect to determining the quality of *experiencing*. That is, a strong will prepares him/her to *experience*, to *explore*, to understand and to investigate his/her world, all of which require prognosticative effort and overcoming *resistances*. A child with strong willing is not necessarily someone who in general achieves but is someone whose *becoming* takes a direction and course.

According to Van der Merwe, a child's *willing* is meaningfully related to his/her *lived experiencing* in that his/her emotional lived experiencing is the basis for a strong *willing*, also known as will-power, and thus determines its quality. To the extent that his/her emotional life is *stable* his/her willing is strong and he/she will choose and decide more effectively, and any indecisiveness becomes controlled. However, if his/her emotional life is characterized by tension, uncertainty, restlessness, his/her *willing* becomes weakened and this has serious implications for actualizing his/her *becoming* and *learning*. This means a strong *willing* is indispensable for actualizing his/her intellectual (*gnostic/cognitive*) potentialities and, with this, *the lived experiencing* of meaning, especially as this is disclosed in a learning situation at home and in school. However, it is *equally the case that his/her affective*, cognitive and normative

lived experiencing are similarly served in their unfolding by his/her *willing* (Sonnekus).

Similarly, since child *experiencing* is the original mode by which he/she turns to reality and since this turning is steered and directed though his/her *willing*, simultaneously, there is *lived experiencing* of reality. He/she *lived experiences* what he/she *experiences* and in his/her search for meaning he/she gives sense and meaning to reality. What he/she *lived experiences* (things, learning content, etc.) become invested with personal sense and meaning. Through child *lived experiencing*, the experienced reality (content) now becomes reality-for-me; the "I" itself can give meaning to it. The meaning that reality in itself has is changed to personal meaning via his/her *lived experiencing*. The "something" (content) *experienced* becomes, on the ground of his/her *lived experiencing*, e.g., beautiful ugly, pleasant, unpleasant, meaningful, meaningless, interesting, uninteresting, valuable, valueless that carry the stamp of his/her own unique meaning. A child's meanings "congeal" in his/her *lived experiencing* (Van der Stoep) because of the personal attribution of meaning, and that is why his/her *lived experiencing* is the meaningful completion, refinement and deepening of the meaning of what he/she *experiences*.

Through this sense- and meaning-giving activity, actualized on feeling, knowing and normative levels, he/she builds for him/herself personal *possessed experience* that, as he/she *learns* and *becomes*, increases in depth and breadth. Such *possessed experience* has significance for a child's future *experiencing* and it co-determines the level on which he/she gives sense and meaning to reality.

Since the essences of the psychic life of an educand continually interact with each other in their execution, his/her *willed experiencing* of reality and giving personal meaning is simultaneously *learning* to know. As he/she *willfully experiences* he/she also *knows*. His/her *experiencing*, then, originally is characterized by an *intuitive knowing* of reality that also is a first grip on reality. Although this *intuitive knowing* is limited and incomplete, it is the basis on which all *gnostic/cognitive knowing* (understanding, conceptualizing) is built.

*Conceptual knowing*, as the highest form of knowing, originates in *intuitive knowing*, but as far as its results are concerned, it involves a much higher level, seen here as *real insight, understanding and thus objective knowing*. Such *objective knowing* means that a child moves him/herself from an *emotional (pathic/affective)* level to a more *knowing (gnostic/cognitive) level of lived experiencing* (conceptualizing, understanding). This elevation in lived *experiencing*, at the same time, is an elevation in his/her knowing. Now he/she finds him/herself on a level where he/she can, in a succinct and objective manner, communicate about a diversity of themes such as the *learning content*, certain *perceived phenomena*, and (especially a child in puberty) whether specific values and norms have validity.

In compliance with the coherent nature of *experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving*, as essences of the psychic life, we conclude that as they are actualized, they *flow into behaviors and become discernible in his/her behaving*. This *behaving* is the outcome as well as the crowning of the actualization of these essences.

A child *behaves* in and through *experiencing, willing, lived experiencing* and *knowing* (Bondesio), but also, and especially, on the basis of *possessed experience* that he/she has at his/her disposal, the outcome of actualizing the psychic life as a *totality-in-function*. A child broadens and deepens his/her possessed experience as he/she actualizes his/her psychic life as a totality.

Furthermore, a child's *existing possessed experience* is important for his/her *future behaving* because it is the determinant of the level of his/her *behaving*. It is concluded that the ways in which he/she behaves are to a great measure a reflection of the quality of his/her *learning and becoming*. With this, *behaving* is the outcome and the crowning of the actualization of his/her psychic life.

Thus, child *behaving* points to the continual actualization of his/her *psychic life as a unity* (here and now) as well as his/her *learning and becoming* over time; thus, the wealth of *possessed experience*

available for actualizing his/her *entire psychic life* influences, co-determines, and becomes evident in his/her *behaving*.

#### 2.2.7.1 Synthesis: The psychic life as a totality-in-function

- The psychic life is continually actualized as a totality-in-function in relationship to reality.
- The actualization of its different essences, viewed in their coherence, is indicative of the psychic life as a totality-in-function.
- The listed ordering of the essences is neither chronological nor ontological, but merely a possible logical ordering. This implies that the different essences do not follow each other in time but they continually interact, supplement and co-define each other; thus, in their origin and actualization their source is equi-primordially given in the psychic life.
- As far as a child's possessed experience is concerned, it has two dimensions: On the one hand, it is the outcome or sedimentation of his/her actualized psychic life as a totality-in-function, i.e., viewed in its coherent nature of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving. On the other hand, a child's existing possessed experience influences the actualization of his/her psychic life now and in the future.

Child behaving, as the result and crowning of actualizing the psychic life, thus is co-defined, steered and directed by his/her existing possessed experience. That is, this experiencing, the actualization of willing, lived experiencing and knowing activities, in their coherence, are equally influenced and co-defined by his/her present possessed experience.

Possessed experience is always someone's (my) and, according to its contents, it is an aggregate of understanding and knowledge, various competencies to act (abilities, skills), as well as to judge and give sense and meaning to reality in unique ways. Our possessed experience not only has a gnostic/cognitive flavor, but because of its personal nature, it also is affectively and normatively colored. Without the continual broadening and deepening of his/her possessed experience, becoming a proper adult will not occur.



\* The proper and meaningful actualization of the psychic life as a totality-in-function, as this finds form in a child's becoming and learning, necessarily implicates educating (upbringing) since becoming a proper adult is not possible without education.

### 2.2.8 Concluding remark

The aim of this chapter is to present a general orientation to the area of study in which psychopedagogics is involved. Since only general guidelines are drawn, some of the *details* arising here will be discussed in chapter III on learning.

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